

Good evening,

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I am Tim Hunter, a professor and department head for Digital Media & Design and Director of the Digital Media Center. I work in the School of Fine Arts and have been at UConn for nearly 8 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you this evening and for all of your support over the years for the University of Connecticut.

I understand the challenges you face in reducing the states budget deficit and we are grateful that you are indeed working diligently to address this challenge.

However, the recommended budget released last week creates a gap of approximately \$40 million between the state funding and what is needed to operate the university next year.

A reduction to the appropriation in that amount would without question have a devastating impact on our ability to offer the Digital Media program at UConn.

Digital media, as a sector of the national economy, experienced steady growth through the recent recession and continues today to grow exponentially. Proof of this can be found in a search of the

Career Builder website revealing hundreds of high paying careers in digital media.

This growth is also taking place in Connecticut as more businesses embrace digital for their communications, analysis, production and research needs. To this point, all of our faculty and more than 40% of our students are currently engaged with 14 companies working on digital projects. They are tackling problems from scientific visualizations to the creation of interactive systems empowering emotionally and physically challenged children.

Our programs innovative work includes the development of personal health games and games to educate people about healthcare in America. Our students are building mobile apps, websites and web based tools and protocols supporting digital scholarship, research, communications and entertainment. We are creating digital and social media tools for business communications and analytics while also educating our students in the aesthetics and techniques of 2D and 3D animation and motion graphics for film and television.

Nearly every business today employs digital means as a way to expand customer and client engagement. At the same time, these companies are struggling to find talented people to innovate for them in the digital space.

Our program at UConn is delivering on these employment needs through its unique approach to education and its connection to external businesses through internships. We believe our learning paradigm will yield the next generation of digitally savvy leaders and entrepreneurs who, in the future, will drive innovation, job creation and economic development.

The proposed deep cuts being discussed would reverse the progress we have made severely impacting our program. Seventy-two (72%) of our faculty are on annually renewable contracts. These are highly accomplished faculty whose positions may be reduced or eliminated with a cut of this magnitude, which would in essence - shutdown the program.

I hope through my testimony that you can see the devastating impact this budget cut will have on our students, our faculty and by extension the state's economic future.

Thank you for your time this evening.

Tim Hunter